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MEDIA RELEASE

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**JAY WILLIAMSON, THS SENIOR, SELECTED BY TEA COMMISSIONER
AS TEXAS DELEGATE TO UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM**



Texarkana, TX – Texas High School Senior and Student Body President, Jay Williamson, has been selected by the Texas Education Agency Commissioner of Education to serve as one of two student delegates from Texas at the 56th annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) which will be held in Washington, D.C. from March 3-10, 2018. This is the third student from Texas High School to be selected for this honor.

Established in 1962 by U.S. Senate Resolution 324, the program was created for high school students so that they could gain an in-depth view of the Senate and the federal government overall as well as a deeper understanding of the interrelationship of the legislative, judicial and executive branches. The USSYP allows for a unique educational experience for outstanding high school students interested in pursuing careers in public service. Each year, two of the highest-achieving students from each state are selected through an extremely competitive merit-based selection process held at each state's Department of Education nationwide.

"I could not have been more surprised to learn of my selection to the USSYP program," said Williamson. "It was just an honor to apply and be in consideration. Now hearing about the other students selected and their achievements, it makes it all the more valuable."

Delegates will have the opportunity to experience their national government in action by meeting and learning from the highest level of elected and appointed officials in Washington. They will hear major policy addresses from Senators, cabinet members, officials from the Department of State and Defense and directors of other federal agencies as well as participate in a meeting with a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

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“As President of the Texas High School Student Body, I have grown as a public speaker because of the many opportunities I have been given to speak on the group’s behalf,” Williamson continued. “I have become confident in my own voice and am more apt to speak up on issues. I have become more confident in my ability to lead and coordinate events. Being over such a great student council has led me to be well diverse in my abilities.”

Following graduation in May 2018, Williamson will attend the University of Texas – Austin McCombs School of Business majoring in Business with a minor in Government. He hopes to work as a staff member for a political campaign and possibly consider his own run for elected office.

“Jay is an outstanding young man who leads by example,” shared Brad Bailey, Texas High School Principal. He is a dedicated leader for THS and is very deserving of this award. Jay will represent Texas High, TISD and the state of Texas quite well.”

Honorary Co-Chairs for the 2018 United States Senate Youth Program are Vice President Michael R. Pence, Senator Mitch McConnell and Senator Charles E. Schumer.

The 104 student delegates also receive \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship to the college or university of their choice with encouragement to continue coursework in government and history. The Hearst Foundation has fully funded the USSYP since its inception, including transportation, accommodations, meals and individual college scholarships – no government funds are ever utilized.

The USSP alumni now number over 5,500. Among the many distinguished alumni of the program are Senator Susan Collins, the first delegate to become a U.S. Senator; Senator Cory Gardner, the second delegate to be elected to the U.S. Senate and the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; former Chief Judge Robert Henry, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit; New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first delegate to be elected governor; former Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt and former Presidential Advisors Thomas “Mack” McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional notables include former Lt. Governor of Idaho David LeRoy, former President of the Progressive Policy Institute Robert Shapiro, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

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